

amendment actually takes the same approach as Senator MARKEY's does. It adds a simple requirement, a requirement that before the Drug Enforcement Administration can register someone to prescribe or dispense these powerful addictive medications, that this applicant must be able to prove that they are either a U.S. citizen or a legal resident. That is it.

There is actually a Federal law already on the books that requires this. It was signed into law and passed by Congress and signed by Bill Clinton in 1996, but there was a loophole in the law that allowed States—like what New York is doing—States to come around later and exempt illegal immigrants from the requirement in their State.

New York is doing that right now through its board. It is not the State legislature that is doing it in New York. It is not the citizens of New York who are doing it. They are not the ones saying they are willing to take a chance and loosen the standards of those who can prescribe these powerful, addictive medications. This is being done, and this decision is being made by a very small State agency acting on its own authority. I think this decision is much too important to be left to a small group of people in Albany, NY.

I want to be clear. This is not about immigrants. This is about the threat that comes from the misuse of opioid painkillers. It is about maintaining the standards of the law. My grandfather came to this country. He did it legally like millions of others. He followed the rules. He worked hard. He continued to obey the law. We all know this is a country of immigrants, and we know America still proudly welcomes legal immigrants today.

We also know that being a doctor is not like other jobs. When a patient goes to her doctor, she may literally be placing her own life in that doctor's hands. People need to have complete confidence that their doctor is ethical, honest, and can be trusted with life-and-death decisions. How can a patient have this kind of faith in someone who broke the law and is in the country illegally at this time? This action by the New York Board of Regents could seriously undermine the doctor-patient relationship and the trust that needs to be there.

Doctors are held to the highest possible standards. They need to be outstanding members of their community. In the State of New York, a doctor can actually lose their license if convicted of a crime. What is it being in the country illegally? Why would we then give a license to someone who already knows they have committed a crime by being in the country illegally? It makes no sense.

As a doctor, I will tell you these opioid medications are very powerful. They can be abused, and they have been abused, especially if they fall into the hands of someone who is not up to the highest moral professional and

legal standards who is writing the prescription in the first place.

We in Congress have a responsibility to make sure such dangerous medications can be given out only by people who meet the standards. I think it would set a terrible precedent if we allow people who are in this country illegally to begin prescribing these highly addictive drugs, but that is what New York wants to do. I don't think we can allow someone who has broken the law to serve as the gatekeeper for those potentially dangerous medications. We owe every American the peace of mind that the doctor treating their sick child is who that doctor claims to be and that their doctor is in the country legally.

The New York Board of Regents is ignoring, absolutely ignoring, this important public health and public safety concern. If New York will not act to protect its people, then Congress must.

Thank you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

#### COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today the Senate continues to work on legislation that addresses the heroin epidemic affecting our communities all over the country. Every State represented by a Senator in this Chamber is affected by it. I am pleased to see that yesterday we had a strong vote on an important step forward to consider more amendments, with the hope we will consider them today or tomorrow and then have a vote on this legislation before the end of the week and send it over to the House of Representatives,

where there is similar legislation, a companion bill that has already been drafted and is also bipartisan.

I thank SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, who is on the floor now, my coauthor, and also Senators AMY KLOBUCHAR, KELLY AYOTTE, and the 42 other bipartisan co-authors of our legislation. This is bipartisan, but it is also comprehensive and evidence based. It is not just supported by a lot of Senators, but it is also supported by a lot of groups. That is very important.

Over the past few years, Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have worked with groups around the country and in our own States to come up with the right answers; in other words, evidence-based solutions to prevention and education to help people not make the mistake and get into the funnel of addiction but also, once those people are addicted, to help them more with better treatment, better recovery, and to ensure we are treating addiction like a disease, which it is. We are also helping law enforcement and helping to keep prescription drugs off the bathroom shelves and helping to monitor people's prescription drug use because a lot of this comes from the overprescribing of prescription drugs for pain medication.

I am pleased to see we are making progress, and I want to talk about one specific issue that is included in the legislation but which we have yet to talk about, at least at length on the floor.

Over the last few years, we have had five forums in Washington, DC, to talk about issues related to addiction. Some have been with regard to the science of addiction, some about our youth, some about prevention, and some about better treatment options, but we had one that was particularly interesting, I thought. It was about a very special issue; that is, how to treat substance abuse impacting our veterans and servicemembers and how to prevent our veterans and servicemembers from becoming subject to this addiction.

In the legislation we are considering on the floor, we focus on this issue. This came out of the expert testimony we had and the work that has been done around the country on this issue. CARA allows veterans who were discharged for a substance abuse disorder to use drug courts as they recover.

Too often our men and women come home from serving our country with untreated trauma and PTSD, which often manifests itself in an addiction. We know from the research that has been done that more than 20 percent of veterans with PTSD also suffer from an addiction or dependence on drugs like heroin or a dependence on alcohol. So post-traumatic stress disorder is related very much to this addiction issue.

A few weeks ago, I was in Columbus, OH, and met with our veterans court there. We had a roundtable discussion with some of the veterans who had been through it. It was actually a very inspiring experience hearing from veterans, many of whom had been serving

our military in combat roles and had come home, gotten into some trouble. They were in and out of the court system, and then they found these veterans courts. These courts actually helped divert these veterans from prison, into treatment, and then into a support network with other veterans.

For veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, going to jail can be a major hurdle in their recovery. Yet for many who turn to drugs and alcohol in an attempt to self-medicate, that is exactly where they end up.

Ryan is a combat veteran. He served in Iraq. He had a distinguished career. He got home and found himself in a situation where he had trouble readjusting to life back at home outside of the military. He got into some trouble and ended up in jail. That didn't work for him. His quote was this:

You send me to jail and all you're doing is sending me back to the jungle. All those coping skills I've learned, they go out the window. I'm the type of person that you put me in there and all hell breaks loose.

That is Ryan. Fortunately for Ryan, he was able to participate in a veterans treatment court and get on the path to recovery. I am very proud of him today. He is a student at a major university in Ohio and about to graduate. He has his life back together and his family back together. Again, it was an inspirational story because he has taken it upon himself to focus on his addiction and get the help he needed through this veterans court.

There are 17 veterans treatment courts in the State of Ohio. The program Ryan went through is a 2-year program that offers mental health and substance abuse treatment to veterans as an alternative to incarceration. These veterans also have to make regular court appearances, so it is not as though they are not connected to the criminal justice system. They are. They know if they test positive for drugs, they will end up back in that system. They are subject to random drug testing.

As Ryan and the other veterans I talked to told me that day in Columbus, OH, this combination of accountability and support—accountability and support—was the right combination for them to get back on the right track. It made a difference for them in getting their lives back together, their families back together, and to once again be contributing to their country.

CARA will expand veterans treatment courts and will also ensure veterans who are discharged for substance abuse issues are also eligible to go through these programs. This is a critical change that will help allow more veterans to get the help they need and again get at the root cause of their addiction.

CARA—the legislation we are considering right now—has the support, as I said, of a lot of groups—130 national stakeholders in public health, law enforcement, criminal justice and drug policy fields, doctors, nurses, and oth-

ers working in the trenches on prevention and treatment. It is designed to fight prescription drug opioid abuse and heroin use holistically, from expanding prevention to supporting recovery.

In addition to the specific provisions I discussed that help our veterans, CARA also expands prevention and educational efforts to prevent prescription opioid abuse and the use of heroin. It increases drug disposal sites to keep medications out of the hands of young people. It helps with regard to drug monitoring to know when people are being prescribed drugs, even if they cross State lines, by having an interstate drug monitoring system.

The legislation also authorizes law enforcement task forces in some of our toughest areas around the country to combat heroin and methamphetamine and expands the availability of the overdose reversal drug naloxone—really a miracle drug—so that our law enforcement agencies and other first responders—our firefighters—have the training for using this drug but also have access to it.

In the criminal justice system, CARA will help to promptly identify and treat individuals suffering from substance abuse disorders and expand these diversion efforts and these education efforts to give these people a second chance.

CARA also authorizes resources to expand treatment, including medication-assisted treatment, based on the evidence that it supports what has worked around the country. So we are trying to hold up some of the best treatment programs in the country where there has been success on a very tough issue, which is taking people through this process of getting back on their feet and recovered.

CARA supports those recovery programs that are strictly focused on youth and building communities of recovery, including at our colleges and universities. It also creates a national task force on recovery to improve ways to address the collateral consequences imposed by addiction.

So this is a comprehensive bill that will help to reverse this tide. Again, this is something that is affecting us all. The numbers are overwhelming. In the United States of America today, there will be about 20 people who will die from overdoses. In Ohio, this happens every week. About 25 people are now dying from overdoses, but that is just part of the problem. Many are not dying from the overdose. Naloxone is working in many cases, for instance. Others aren't overdosing. Yet their lives are ruined, their families are torn apart, and the communities are bearing the brunt of it. Many more crimes are being committed. I was with a prosecutor in Ohio last weekend, and he told me 80 percent of the crime in his county is related now to this issue of heroin and prescription drug abuse.

We need to pass this bill and get it signed into law so it can help reverse

this tide, help our State and local governments and our nonprofits that are doing a great job trying to address this issue, and help individuals who are suffering from this addiction, which is a disease, to get the treatment they need and the recovery efforts that are needed to truly make a difference. This is an epidemic. It has now reached that kind of level—this kind of crisis level.

I am hopeful we will again have a series of amendments that can be included and voted on in the next 24 hours; that we can move forward with this legislation and get a strong vote. We can then send it over to the House with a strong message that it is time for us to do what we can to address this issue and make a difference in the lives of our constituents.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete these remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the Constitution is the primary way the American people set rules for government. America's Founders made sure those were also written down so that as the Supreme Court said more than two centuries ago, they may be neither mistaken nor forgotten.

The U.S. Constitution is one of the shortest and currently the oldest national charter in the world, but while public officials, including every Member of this body, swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution, it appears some are paying very little attention to it.

One of the most popular slogans in the debate over filling the vacancy left by the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia is "Do your job."

Never have so few words been so misleading for so many. Those who use this slogan insist that the Senate's job is to conduct the confirmation process, including hearings and confirmation votes, in a certain way whenever the President makes a nomination. In other words, the Senate should be at the President's beck and call, configuring the confirmation process around a particular timeline that he prefers.

There is some irony here, Mr. President. A few years ago, President Obama wanted to stall certain members of the National Labor Relations Board. The Senate was unlikely to confirm his nominee so the President bypassed the Senate altogether and made so-called recess appointments. The Supreme Court eventually, and unanimously, ruled those appointments were unconstitutional.

Now that the President intends to send a nominee to the Senate, he feels he can dictate how the Senate evaluates that nominee. The President would, no doubt, be the first to say the Senate cannot tell him whom to nominate but apparently feels he can insist

on whatever Senate confirmation process that will suit his purpose.

Colleagues on the other side of the aisle insist the Constitution requires timely hearings and prompt floor votes for every nominee. I don't know what Constitution they are using because the real one says nothing of the kind. The real Constitution gives to the President the power to nominate and to the Senate the separate power of advice and consent, leaving to each the judgment of how to exercise their respective power.

Actually, I should say that my Democratic colleagues are currently insisting that the Constitution requires timely hearings and votes, because they were singing a very different tune only a few years ago.

The minority leader, the minority whip, and the Judiciary Committee ranking member each voted dozens of times to deny any confirmation vote whatsoever for President George W. Bush's judicial nominees—dozens of times. Were they voting to defy the Constitution then, or are they referring to a made-up, fictional Constitution now?

When they served in this body, Vice President BIDEN and former Secretary Hillary Clinton voted, respectively, 29 and 24 times to deny the very confirmation votes they now say the Constitution itself requires. The shape-shifting Constitution they use apparently means whatever then suits their political objectives. A coincidence, I am sure, but a very convenient coincidence.

The President himself, when he was a Senator, tried to deny confirmation votes to multiple nominees, including Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. While President Obama recently said he now regrets voting to filibuster Justice Alito, he did not explain why it took him 3,670 days to reach that conclusion. Cynics might even suggest that his desire now to appoint another Supreme Court Justice may have contributed in some small way to this epiphany.

So when Democrats in this body and their equally confused liberal allies call on the Senate to do its job, they really mean that the Senate should do what they want. I, too, want the Senate to do its job, but I don't find our job description in anyone's political agenda. The Senate's job is to determine the best way to exercise its advice and consent power in each particular situation, and the Senate has done so in different ways, at different times, under different circumstances.

When he was Judiciary Committee chairman in the 107th and 110th Congress, for example, the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, denied a hearing to nearly 60 judicial nominees. Yet those are the hearings he now says the Constitution requires. I don't think he can have it both ways.

On May 19, 2005, the minority leader said that nowhere in the Constitution does it say the Senate must vote on

Presidential nominees. He called that notion rewriting the Constitution and reinventing history. Today, he says the opposite: that the Constitution actually does require a vote. Was he wrong in 2005, or is he, in his own words, rewriting the Constitution and reinventing history today?

No, Mr. President, the Constitution does not dictate how the Senate must exercise its power of advice and consent; the Constitution leaves that up to us in each situation.

The Senate has never allowed a term-limited President to fill a Supreme Court vacancy that opened up this late in his term. In fact, this vacancy is only the third in the last century to occur after Presidential election voting has started. In 1956 and 1968, the Senate did not confirm the nominee until after the next inauguration.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee for 39 years and a chairman for 8 of those years—I am now in my 40th year—I have watched the judicial confirmation process disintegrate. Conservatives and liberals have very different views about the kinds of judges America needs. Several Supreme Court nominees in the last few decades have been subject to intense, confrontational campaigns. In addition, the current Presidential election cycle is already more hostile and divisive than in the past. These are among the circumstances we face today and must consider when deciding how to exercise our power of advice and consent. It would be irresponsible to follow a process suitable for a different situation or, worse, a process designed only to produce a desirable political outcome.

Combining a high-stakes confirmation fight with a no-holds-barred Presidential campaign will produce a storm that will do more harm than good. The better course would be to defer the appointment process until the next President takes office and let the people make this determination. We are not without guidance in making this decision. In June 1992, then-Judiciary Committee Chairman JOSEPH BIDEN argued that if a Supreme Court vacancy occurred in that Presidential election year, the appointment process should be deferred until the election season was over. By combining an increasingly divisive appointment process and a Presidential election that is already underway, he said, "partisan bickering and political posturing" would overwhelm the serious debate necessary to make such an important decision. He could have been talking about 2016 instead of 1992.

This vacancy also presents the American people with a rare opportunity to address the direction of the judiciary. The percentage of Americans concerned about that direction has risen steadily for years, and while voters do not appoint judges, they do elect the President who nominates and the Senate that gives advice and consent.

Elections, after all, have consequences. The 2012 election had con-

sequences for the President's power to nominate, and the 2014 election had consequences for the Senate's power of advice and consent. With this Supreme Court vacancy on the table, the 2016 election can similarly have consequences for the American people's voice on this important issue. Deferring the appointment process also minimizes partisanship and maximizes fairness.

No one knows the party of the next President, the makeup of the next Senate, or the identity of the nominee the Senate will eventually consider. Choosing the appropriate process for the current circumstances, rather than for partisan advantage, can prevent a nominee from being perceived as a political pawn.

The Constitution leaves nominations to the President and leaves advice and consent to the Senate. That division of responsibility is written down for all to see and, hopefully, for none to forget.

Deferring the process for filling the Scalia vacancy until the next President takes office and leaving it up to the American people is the best approach for the Senate, the judiciary, and the country.

Before I close, I have to say a word about the disgraceful attacks on my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. I have served with him on the Finance Committee for nearly 25 years and on the Judiciary Committee for 35 years. I have served 40 years on the Judiciary Committee but 35 of them have been served with Senator GRASSLEY. If anyone knows his own mind, it is Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY. He has served on the Judiciary Committee longer than all but four Senators in the committee's history. No one is more dedicated to the Judiciary Committee and to the Senate than CHUCK GRASSLEY is.

Each of us is entitled to our own opinions or positions on issues that come before this body, even controversial ones. Each of us can feel as strongly as we want about those issues. But I want to categorically reject the notion that a difference of opinion means that someone such as Senator GRASSLEY is compromising the integrity or independence of the Judiciary Committee. That comes very close to impugning his character, and that sort of attack is beneath the dignity of this body because everybody in this body knows that CHUCK GRASSLEY is a man of great character, great honesty, great service, hard work, and cares for this wonderful country.

It is irritating to me to see the personal attacks that have been made. I don't think we should be personally attacking each other. We can find fault with each other. We can criticize each other on the issues. We can differ with each other. We can be politically different from each other, as we are. But to personally attack somebody with the prestige of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is beneath the dignity of this body, and it is beneath the

dignity of the attackers. It really bothers me.

We have had wide differences of opinion on the Judiciary Committee. Let's face it: It is a tough committee. It is a very partisan committee. The Democrats on that side in the committee are extremely partisan, and the Republicans on our side of the committee are extremely partisan too. That is not necessarily bad as long as people are honest and people respect the opinions of others.

We can have downright bitter battles and bitter exchanges, but we don't have to malign each other in doing that. It is a tough committee. These are tough issues the Judiciary Committee handles. I know, I was chairman of this committee. I have to say it is a wonderful committee, and it is probably good that it is a diverse committee where you have a lot of liberal Democrats on one side and you have a lot of conservative Republicans on the other. We can bat up against each other, and sometimes we even come up with very good legislation.

Most of the time, everybody on that committee is concerned about having the best judges we can possibly get. Even though there have been some pains between various members of the committee from time to time—this naturally occurs when you have people who feel very deeply about these subjects—there is still no excuse for maligning the current chairman of this committee, CHARLES GRASSLEY.

I don't think you are winning a debate when you challenge somebody as a person of the highest integrity that this body has to offer. Senator GRASSLEY is one of those persons. There are others here too. I hope I am one. The fact is, CHUCK GRASSLEY is one of the best people we have in the Senate, he is one of the most noble people in the Senate, and he is one of the most honest people in the Senate. He is one of the people who are more at ease around the common people in this country and in the State of Iowa than many of us in the Senate, and he is a person of dignity and capacity. He is also a person who doesn't forget, and I would prefer to have people treat him with dignity so that he can forget.

All I can say is that there is not a better person on the committee than CHUCK GRASSLEY, and I call on my colleagues on the other side to be gentlemen and to treat him with the respect he certainly deserves. The fact that they disagree with his position on the Supreme Court right now is irrelevant in some ways when it comes to characterizing him as somebody less than who he is.

That committee is a committee of deep feelings on both sides, and thank God it is because that is what makes it a great committee. That is what makes it so people really want to be on it. We have really good debates in that committee, and we have really good people on both sides, not the least of whom is CHUCK GRASSLEY, and I want him treat-

ed with dignity and respect. I want people to know that he doesn't take positions he doesn't believe in. There are some who do in this body, but he doesn't.

I expect people in this body to show the proper decorum, to show friendship even when we have deep differences. Show respect for somebody who certainly deserves it. I hope we don't have any more of this idle chatter that can destroy any kind of rapport we have in the Senate, and that goes for both sides. Senator GRASSLEY is being maligned unfairly, and I don't like it and neither would anybody else who has any brains or any thought about what is decent and honorable.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to share my support for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015.

This legislation, of course, that we have been debating for well over a week now aims to address the growing drug addiction crisis facing our country by not only promoting prevention and education, but by increasing efforts to improve treatment and recovery for those who have fallen to this growing epidemic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that from 2002 to 2013, the number of heroin-related overdose deaths nearly quadrupled, with approximately 8,200 deaths in 2013. The CDC furthermore found that 44 people die every day due to prescription drug overdoses.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that the abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco costs the United States roughly \$700 billion every year because of increased criminal activity, loss of employment, and health care costs associated with drug use.

Colorado, unfortunately, is no exception to the increase in drug overdose deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that drug overdose deaths in Colorado have risen in every single county except for one over the last 12 years. The Colorado Health Institute found that Colorado's 2014 rate of 16.3 drug-related deaths per 100,000 people exceeded the U.S. average of 14.7 deaths per 100,000 people. This same study by the Colorado Health Institute found that drug overdose deaths climbed 68 percent in Colorado between 2002 and 2014—a 68-percent increase in drug overdose deaths in 12 years.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that nearly 23 million adults in the United States have struggled with drug use.

However, the National Institutes of Health found that only 10 percent of U.S. adults who need treatment are receiving it. So only 2.3 million people out of the 23 million they have identified with some kind of a drug use problem—only 10 percent, 2.3 million out of the 23 million—are receiving some kind of treatment.

So what are we going to do to move forward from here? We are on an unsustainable path when it comes to addiction and when it comes to its treatment.

It is imperative that States are empowered with the resources needed to address the unique needs of each individual State, and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act does just that. The bill leaves behind the idea that the one-size-fits-all program out of Washington, DC, can fix everything. It encourages States to develop their own strategies because what works in Colorado may not work in New Jersey and what works in New York may not work in Texas or California.

It encourages these strategies to prevent, treat, and reduce the growing addiction epidemic by, No. 1, creating an interagency task force to develop best practices for prescribing pain medication and pain management. The CDC found in a National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted from 2011 to 2013 that individuals addicted to opiate painkillers are 40 times more likely to be addicted to heroin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2012, health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for opioid pain relievers. That is nearly one bottle of pills for every single American—certainly every single American adult.

It is absolutely imperative that best practices are established to ensure health professionals are being trained properly to identify patients who require prescription pain relievers for chronic pain management and those who do not, in an effort to treat this system and to better identify.

The consequences of this addiction, we have seen in our communities, are devastating to individuals and their families. It is vital that States establish best practices to minimize the devastating effects that our communities have seen and our families have seen.

No. 2, this bill expands disposal sites for unwanted prescription medications. Community pharmaceutical drug take-back programs, as they are called, allow individuals to dispose of unwanted or expired medications in a safe and responsible way. Many households in our country don't safely and securely store unused pharmaceutical medications, leaving open the door for abuse by teenagers and young adults who might find the prescription drugs, the unused or expired pharmaceuticals—they might find them in the household.

According to the CDC, the abuse of prescription drugs has become the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 25 to 64.

Furthermore, the abuse is strongly linked to heroin addiction.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, four out of five new heroin users started with prescription medications. Unfortunately, the vast majority of medication take-back programs in Colorado are in the Denver metro area, but we are not simply dealing with a metro problem. Getting unused drugs out of the communities eliminates the potential for misuse and decreases drastically the potential for addiction. The expansion of these programs is a step in the right direction to reduce the accessibility of dangerous prescription medication, especially in rural Colorado.

Third, this legislation also aims to identify and to treat incarcerated individuals who suffer from addiction by implementing medication-assisted treatment programs for use by criminal justice agencies. Statistics show that imprisonment has a small impact on future drug use when addiction goes untreated. The National Association of Drug Court Professionals found that 95 percent of those who committed drug-related crimes returned to drug abuse after release from prison. We know that addiction is treatable, and it is important that these individuals have access to addiction and recovery services so that they don't continue to cycle in and out of our Nation's prisons.

I would like to share a success story from an adult recovery program in the Denver area about a young woman who went to a treatment facility to turn her life around. I am not using her real name.

Sarah was admitted to our program in Denver in September of 2015. Outside of the first week, she has been clean and sober. Sarah found a job and has received positive performance reports, and she also received a raise at the place of employment she sought out after treatment. She has begun to do additional volunteer work in her spare time as a way to give back to her community that took care of her through these programs. She has reconnected with her family. Remembering every holiday since she started this program, Sarah reports that it is the first time she can remember being sober for that holiday. She reports that she is loving her life and that there is no turning back for her.

This bill will create more of these success stories to help people get back on their feet, to reconnect with their families, to engage in community service, and to receive raises at work because they do a good job when they make sure their addiction is broken.

Fourth, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act takes a step in the right direction by strengthening prescription drug monitoring programs aimed to identify and treat drug-seeking individuals. State electronic databases that collect data on substances dispensed throughout the State have been incredibly effective in tracking

the movement of prescription opiates throughout the country. Utilizing these programs allows States to identify drug diversion, prescription drug fraud, doctor shopping, and forgery. Prescription drug monitoring programs also identify drug-seeking individuals more easily to get them into treatment facilities so they can receive the care they need, just as Sarah did in Denver. Tracking and minimizing drug diversion is absolutely vital, and this legislation takes a step in the right direction to strengthen this policy.

As we talk about this legislation, I think it is important that we have these stories that have been told on the Senate floor about what has happened to friends and family members, about drug overdose and opioid abuse, about heroin addiction, the fact that we had doctor shopping, and the fact that we had forgery of prescriptions or perhaps unused drugs sitting around somebody's house without a take-back program. Improper ways to dispose of it mean that teenagers and young adults are getting their hands on it. We recognize in these stories that it is not just the metro area, not just our urban centers that are facing these challenges. In fact, it was recently reported in the Denver Post under this headline: "Drug overdose deaths hit record levels in rural southern Colorado." There is a comment from the San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group. The San Luis Valley is in southwestern Colorado, in the Western Slope of Colorado.

"We are getting more referrals for heroin, along with prescription drug abuse," said Kristina Daniel, chief operating officer of the San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group. "We have a need for services in our area for sure."

Among Colorado counties, the most striking increase in drug deaths occurred in Baca County in the southeast part of the State, an agriculture community bordering the Presiding Officer's home State of Oklahoma. They are talking about the death rate having quintupled in 12 years. This is a small rural community bordering both Kansas and Oklahoma in the corner of our State—a rural community that has seen its death rates quintuple in 12 years. The amount of hardship that has been placed on families and friends is unimaginable and unacceptable. With this legislation we can help work through these challenges to overcome them and to start putting an end to the tragedies that we have talked about now for this past week, because this is an epidemic in our country. Drug overdose and heroin opioid abuse don't discriminate against race, gender, or economic status. It has hit some of the most unsuspecting in our country.

I am proud to join my colleagues to support this broadly bipartisan legislation. I heard overwhelming support from my constituency in Colorado. Everyone from local law enforcement, families, victims of addiction, recovery specialists, and mental health providers have joined together to voice their support.

I would like to commend my colleagues Senators PORTMAN and AYOTTE for their extensive efforts to advocate on behalf of those who do not have a voice. I am proud to join my colleagues, and I urge the Senate to support this legislation.

HONORING CORPORAL NATE CARRIGAN

Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Corporal Nate Carrigan and the work of Master Patrol Deputy Kolby Martin and Captain Mark Hancock of the Park County Sheriff's Office.

On the morning of February 24, while serving an eviction notice, the resident of the home they were serving the eviction notice to opened fire on the officers. Master Patrol Deputy Martin and Captain Hancock suffered injuries from the exchange and Corporal Carrigan tragically lost his life. Combined, these three men had served the citizens of Park County for over 35 years.

Corporal Carrigan was a pillar of the Park County community. His work led to the successful conclusion of many cases during his time with the sheriff's office. Park County was always home for him, growing up among the green hills and blue skies of Colorado, where he took on the role of serving his community.

As a teenager, he was a wrestler and the catcher for the Platte Canyon High School baseball team. Twenty years later he was coaching the same baseball team he had played on, and he was the assistant coach for the high school football team. It was the future of his community that he cared so deeply for and that he stood ready on that thin blue line to protect.

Residents of this small town recognize the value and importance of a close-knit community. It provides a source of comfort and strength during a difficult time such as this. In this quiet mountain town, colleagues, store owners, and schoolmates are often friends and neighbors as well. They come together to lift one another up as they honor a member who has fallen in service. It is a place where those surrounding you naturally feel like family.

The officers who were dispatched with Corporal Carrigan were not only coworkers but friends and even coaches of the very same sporting teams. This loss reminds us of the difficult and dangerous situations that our first responders are placed into each and every day.

My deepest sympathy is with those at the Park County Sheriff's Office who not only lost a team member but a comrade as well and to Corporal Carrigan's loved ones who are mourning the loss of a friend and family member so near and dear to their hearts. We honor law enforcement, who, in the spirit of selfless sacrifice, honor their communities through their service. Their work to protect our State never finishes, their bravery never waivers, and our gratitude will never cease.

This is the second time in a week that I have come down to the floor and mourned the loss of a brave law enforcement officer in Colorado, and I pray that we never have to do this again.

Our prayers go to Corporal Carrigan's family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I wish to speak for 5 to 10 minutes about an important matter, and so I appreciate being recognized.

Madam President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is postcloture on the substitute amendment to the CARA bill.

Mr. WICKER. We will let the time run on that issue.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Madam President, at this point I wish to talk about Alzheimer's and an opportunity that we have to cure this most serious disease. We could find a cure for Alzheimer's, Madam President and my colleagues, and we could do it through American ingenuity.

No obstacle has ever been too great for American ingenuity. We have defied seemingly impossible odds in the past. We have eradicated polio from the entire North American Continent and from most of the globe. We have mapped the human genome. We have been to the Moon. We are going to send somebody to Mars. We can conquer Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's was first discovered more than a century ago. When you think about it, we only began human flight about 100 years ago. Think of what we have done in human flight. It just boggles the imagination.

We need to cure Alzheimer's here at the beginning of the second century of this disease. We have made progress in understanding the disease. Yet we still do not know how to stop it. We don't know how to slow it, and we certainly don't know how to prevent it from happening.

Alzheimer's continues to cause profound human suffering. It affects 5 million Americans who have the disease, but not only them. It takes a toll on family and friends forced to watch their loved ones slip away. I could tell you from personal experience I know what I am talking about.

Last month Time magazine featured Alzheimer's on the cover: "A radical new drug could change old age." "The Longevity Issue." There is an article in here entitled "Alzheimer's from a New Angle." I think we need a new angle to address Alzheimer's in using innovative drug trials, as the magazine indicates, but also in a new angle concerning the use of prize competitions. I propose that Congress should look at Alzheimer's from the angle of using the XPRIZE Foundation and using a suggestion that has been endorsed by a number of organizations that have thought long and hard about this.

I introduced the EUREKA Act last fall as a way to reinvigorate the fight against Alzheimer's and related dementias. EUREKA stands for Ensuring Useful Research Expenditures is Key for Alzheimer's—EUREKA. We have found it, and we can find a cure for Alzheimer's. This bill could be the beginning of finding a cure.

Finding a cure is our ultimate goal, but it will take steps to get there. My bill would create prize competitions to reward breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research. I want to assure my colleagues who are very interested in NIH funding that EUREKA would not be a substitute for any dollars that are going to current research funding for Alzheimer's. That would continue, it ought to continue, and we ought to do whatever we can to expand that.

EUREKA would be in addition to what we are doing at the National Institutes of Health. Prizes would be awarded for a number of advancements, perhaps drug treatments to early detection methods. The best part is there would be nothing for us to lose because with a prize competition you pay only for success. Without success, the American taxpayer pays nothing when it comes to the EUREKA bill.

I am grateful for the bipartisan support that my bill has already received in the Senate. Thirty-five of our colleagues have sponsored the bill. I believe by the end of the day I will be able to announce 36. I hope even more will lend their support. Alzheimer's is certainly not a partisan issue. It is a national issue and one of the great challenges of our time, not only from a human standpoint but from a budget standpoint.

Alzheimer's is a major spending issue. It is responsible for \$226 billion a year. The estimates are that by the year 2050, those costs will be \$1 trillion per year. We have a \$19 trillion debt right now. Think of the additional debt that will be piled up unless we tackle this issue and get to a cure. Think of the savings. Think of the other areas we would be able to address if we didn't spend so much of our Medicaid budget on Alzheimer's patients, so much of our Medicare budget on Alzheimer's patients.

Experts say \$2 billion in research funding is needed to prevent and treat Alzheimer's by the year 2025. This remains the goal of the Alzheimer's plan, and it remains my goal, but that is a much higher number than we can afford at the NIH level right now.

However, by fostering public-private partnerships, as the EUREKA bill would do, we could build on current resources in new and exciting ways. These partnerships would help unleash the power of American innovation and the power of American competition to encourage people from different backgrounds and sectors to work together in pursuit of a life-changing discovery. This could work. Prize competitions have worked in the past. When Charles Lindbergh achieved a nonstop flight be-

tween New York and Paris, he won a \$25,000 prize and helped inspire the aviation industry that we know today.

Another example of success in this concept is the XPRIZE. The competition is currently sponsored by the XPRIZE Foundation. The XPRIZE Foundation has been promoting technological breakthroughs for more than two decades. In 2004 it offered \$10 million for the first reusable manned spacecraft. This XPRIZE competition generated \$100 million in investments by competitors. A \$10 million prize generated \$100 million in investments by competitors. In 2011, a skimmer that accelerates the cleanup of oilspills was awarded a \$1 million XPRIZE.

So this can work and it will work if we give it a chance. The bottom line is that we need America's best and brightest minds working on Alzheimer's right away. We need a way to reward success. Deaths from Alzheimer's are on the rise. Its costs already exceed those for cancer and heart disease. Think about that. The costs for Alzheimer's per year exceeds the cost for heart disease and cancer put together. So we need to put our emphasis where the need is.

I thank all of the organizations that have come together and endorsed this concept. I thank my friends at the XPRIZE Foundation. They stood with me last fall and endorsed this concept. This legislation was designed with the help of the XPRIZE Foundation, in consultation with the XPRIZE Foundation, and they know what they are talking about. I thank the foundation for doing that.

I also thank the following organizations that have endorsed this concept and specifically endorsed the EUREKA bill: a group called UsAgainstAlzheimer's, the Alzheimer's Association, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, the BrightFocus Foundation, the MIND Center at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in my capital city of Jackson, and also a group called Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease. They all agree that by unleashing this—the concept of a prize competition—we can cure Alzheimer's disease and I hope we will try. This bill is generating support and dialogue for finally putting an end to this devastating disease.

Let's pass this bipartisan legislation.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, as we consider the CARA bill on the floor at this time—the bill that deals with the opioid epidemic in our country—I

thought it might be useful to bring a few statistics forward so we can consider the nature of the epidemic we are dealing with.

In 2014, 29,267 people died from prescription opioid and heroin overdoses in our country, with 10,574 of those people dying from heroin. That is a 28-percent increase from 2013. Can I say that again? There was a 28-percent increase in heroin deaths in our country in 1 year. That is the trendline we are talking about with this epidemic.

Deaths from synthetic opioids like fentanyl increased 79 percent from 2013 to 2014. Can I say that again? A synthetic opioid, fentanyl, had an increase of 79 percent in deaths from 2013 to 2014.

Here is another statistic: Today's young White adults age 25 to 34 are experiencing the highest death rates since the Vietnam war. Can I say that again? White adults between the ages of 25 and 34 are experiencing the highest death rates since the Vietnam war.

In 2014, an estimated 1.9 million people had an opioid use disorder related to prescription pain relievers and an estimated 586,000 had an opioid use disorder related to heroin use.

This is the profile of the epidemic we have in our country right now.

In the 5-year period between 2008 and 2013, overdose deaths from prescription painkillers and heroin combined increased 37 percent.

In 2010, enough opioid painkillers were sold to medicate every American adult with a typical dose of hydrocodone every 4 hours for 1 month.

In 2012, health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers—enough for every American adult in our country to have a bottle of opioid painkillers in 2012. Can I say that again? Enough of these opioid painkillers were prescribed so that every adult could have a bottle on their shelf in 2012.

Pick a number of how many 10-milligram opioid painkillers were approved by the Drug Enforcement Agency in the year 2014. Just pick a number in your brain of how many pills were authorized to be manufactured in our country in 2014. Just pick a number in your brain of 10-milligram pills, of opioids. Here is the answer. You were wrong. The number is 14 billion 10 milligram-equivalent pills that were authorized to be manufactured in our country by the Federal Government—by the Drug Enforcement Agency—in the year 2014.

Again, all this is part of the recipe. Stir well, ignore it for about 15 years, and let our country finally recognize that there is an epidemic in their house, on their street, with their relative, with their friend that should never have happened because we know what the cause of this issue is.

This unparalleled rise in overdose deaths in the United States parallels a fourfold increase from 1999 to 2010 in the sale of opioid painkillers. We know there has been a tripling in the number

of overdose deaths from 1999 to 2012 in our country, but we also know this: America is only 5 percent of the world's population, and yet we now consume 80 percent of all of the opioid painkillers on the planet.

Again, this is not some big puzzle in terms of what has caused this problem. This is all very simple, easy-to-understand stuff that ordinary families have been grappling with, especially over the last 10 years, beginning with their understanding that OxyContin and Percocet and all these other drugs that are allegedly "abuse-deterrent" in fact, when they are swallowed pursuant to a prescription, if done on an extended basis, can cause an addiction that is worse than the underlying problem of the individual taking these painkillers.

Roughly 480,000 emergency room visits in 2011 were attributable to the misuse and abuse of opioid painkillers in our country—488,000 emergency room visits on that one issue.

The prescription painkiller epidemic is killing more women than ever before, and it is estimated that about 18 women die every day from a prescription painkiller overdose.

The numbers are staggering.

We should create a requirement that if the DEA is going to license physicians to prescribe opioids—and every physician in America must go to the DEA to get a license—if they are going to be allowed to prescribe, the physician must prove he or she has been educated to do so.

Two years ago, the FDA authorized their voluntary education program for physicians. Pick a number in your mind of what percentage of all physicians in America have taken advantage of a voluntary education program for opioids. You are wrong, whatever number you just picked. Only 12 percent of all physicians have actually taken the voluntary education program.

The FDA continues to authorize new opioids on the market without even having an expert advisory panel to deal with the issue, even as the DEA continues to authorize 14 billion 10-milligram pills per year.

This issue is one that we have to deal with. We should have physician education. We should have tighter standards for what the FDA does in allowing for new drugs to go out on the market. We have to ensure that they are safe, and we have to ensure there is a proper understanding of their abuse potential. We have to have a day of reckoning with the costs of all of this.

We have to make sure that the funding level is there for families who are already suffering. We have to provide the help for them. We just have to. This is an epidemic that was largely created at the Federal level, largely created by physicians and pharmaceutical companies. It is time for us to finally begin to provide the help these families so desperately need.

Here is what I know most: It will not even be those who have the problem right now, although those families will

get the help they need; it is all the families who will never need the help because we did put the right recipe on the books. We did put the right prevention measures on the books. We did put the preventative measures on the books so that their families never even knew this day arrived in their history.

I hope as we go through this whole process that we can keep those thoughts in mind. That is what we can do from the Federal Government. We should strive to do this. We should try our best to stand up and provide the help that these families need at the local level.

Madam President, I yield the remainder of my time.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I am in strong support of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and its supplemental funding amendment. I have to say I wish we weren't in this position today. I wish we didn't have a persistent and growing drug epidemic in this country that is ravaging our communities and tearing apart our families.

The issue of opioid abuse and heroin addiction is not a Republican or Democratic issue. It is an American issue. It touches every corner of our society: wealthy, middle class, and poor; rural, urban, and suburban; moms, dads, children, and grandchildren; our friends and our neighbors.

It is devastating that today more Americans are dying from drug overdoses than from car accidents. In looking at the facts, there are two things we can point our finger to: prescription opioid painkillers and heroin. Prescription opioids are increasingly to blame for overdose deaths. These drugs include hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine, to name a few. Their numbers are hard to believe—in 2014, 6.5 million Americans over the age of 12 abused controlled substance medications. The second factor, heroin, is even worse in what it has done to our Nation. Heroin use has increased 79 percent nationwide in just 5 years.

These two factors are connected. When people are injured and prescribed painkillers, what is given as help for pain can easily become an addiction. These painkillers are frequently and liberally distributed by medical practitioners for all kinds of issues—acute pain, PTSD, recovery from surgery, recovery from accidents, the list goes on.

However, when those prescriptions run out but the addiction has already set in, people turn to heroin for their fix. Why heroin? Heroin provides similar effects to the drugs they are already taking, is highly addictive, and readily available on the street. It is also incredibly inexpensive—\$10 or less for a hit. When you have something like that at your disposal, it is not hard to see how people can continue their addictions to the point of dying.

Every day, 120 Americans are dying as a result of drug overdoses. It is time to take a hard look at what we can do to fight back and stop these drugs from

taking over our communities. I look to my home State as a prime example.

In my home State, we recognize that heroin and opioid abuse are serious problems that must be addressed. In recent years, deaths from heroin have risen 88 percent. In 2014 alone in Maryland, we had 578 heroin-related deaths and 1,070 drug-overdose deaths. This problem reaches to the far ends of my State.

I met a woman on the Eastern Shore of Maryland who lost everything when one of her family members became addicted to opioids. He resorted to stealing from his family and their family store, and they ended up declaring for bankruptcy because of his addiction and the consequences of it. They lost everything due to one member's addiction, and I can't imagine the strength it took to try to put their family back together after all that.

We have all heard stories of friends, neighbors, and family that have faced addiction. Some have lost that battle; some have made it to recovery and continue to fight every day. There are examples everywhere in our community of both those who have lost their fight and those who, with the help of family and community, have put their lives back together.

When thinking of this problem in Maryland, many people's minds go directly to Baltimore. I can understand why—Baltimore was once characterized as the "heroin capital" of the U.S. It, too, has battled this problem for too many years, with insufficient results to show. In 2014 alone in Baltimore, 303 people died from drug and alcohol overdose. That is more than the number of people who died from homicide.

Today in Baltimore, we have 60,000 people addicted to opioids. That is 1 in every 10 residents of the city. Baltimore has the highest rate of heroin addiction in the country and many more who are abusing prescription opioid medication. While people like Dr. Leana Wen, the director of the Baltimore City Department of Health, have been actively taking steps to turn the tide, there are many more out there who would see this problem continue so they can profit off of it.

But this problem is not just about Baltimore, nor is it just about drug addiction. Widespread addiction leads to other problems in society. Addicts commit crime to get money in order to get drugs, like theft and fraud. Gangs are trafficking and selling these drugs to those who haven't been able to quit. The worst of our society is brought out because of these drugs and their effects, and those effects are being seen in every corner of my State and every level of society.

As I have traveled around Maryland meeting with county executives, every single one talked about the problem of heroin and opioid abuse. Both Republicans and Democrats have told me time and time again, they can't solve this problem themselves. They have asked me to help. They need multiple

resources to fight. They need everyone standing up saying, "enough is enough." It is time to take back our communities, and we can start with this bill and its supplemental funding.

This bill does five things that I think will really help us start going in a more positive direction. First, it expands prevention and educational efforts to prevent opioid abuse and promote treatment and recovery. Second, it expands the availability of lifesaving options to provide for first responders and law enforcement to save lives and reverse overdoses. Third, the bill expands the resources to treat those already in prison who are suffering from addiction and look at alternatives to incarceration for those arrested with substance abuse issues. Fourth, it strengthens programs to monitor prescription drugs to cut down their widespread misuse and expands disposal sites for unwanted medication to keep it out of the hands of our children. Last, it creates an interagency task force with experts in all fields to look at the best practices for prescribing painkillers.

I would like to add that I also support the Shaheen supplemental funding amendment. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act is the authorizing bill here. It makes the promises for services to help Americans in need through education, prevention, and treatment across geographical and economic lines. The Shaheen supplemental amendment is the appropriations that cuts the check for the services. It is tailored to the bill, providing \$240 million to the Department of Justice and \$360 million to the Department of Health and Human Services. Both the bill and its amendment are needed to get help to Americans and to Marylanders who don't have the resources to solve these problems on their own.

We can't enforce our way out of this, and this bill recognizes that. We must look at it from the standpoint of addiction and mental health services as well. The impact that addiction has had on our society has created an urgent and desperate situation. Both this bill and its funding need to be passed immediately.

As chair and vice-chair of the Appropriations Committee, I have fought very hard to get funding in the Federal checkbook to help combat this epidemic. Through a bipartisan effort in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus, we were able to secure record funds to combat drug abuse and provide services to Americans.

As vice chair of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee, cracking down was a priority in the omnibus bill. We provided \$2.45 billion for the Drug Enforcement Agency, who targets and dismantles criminal narcotics activities and regulates and combats prescription drug abuse. This was a \$52 million increase over fiscal year 2015.

The Department of Justice received \$7 million for anti-heroin task forces,

\$12 million for residential drug treatment grants, \$13 million for prescription drug monitoring grants, and \$42 million for drug courts.

Additionally, we were able to allocate significant funds for treatment and recovery of substance abuse disorders, including instituting some new programs. Funds include: \$70 million for the CDC Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention program, more than triple the Fiscal Year 15 level; \$12 million for new Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, grants to equip first responders with overdose-prevention drugs; \$5.6 million for new CDC funding for heroin surveillance; \$10 million for new SAMHSA funding to promote prevention strategies; and \$25 million for SAMHSA medication-assisted treatment programs.

We recognize that our veterans can suffer more than most in opioid abuse, whether from injuries sustained in combat or mental health issues when they return. In further protecting our veterans, we added reforms at the Veterans Administration. These include adopting the CDC guidelines for safe opioid prescriptions for chronic pain, protections against double-prescribing, establishing a working group focused on opioid therapy, ensuring all facilities are prepared with opioid blocking drugs, and providing training to all employees that prescribe controlled substances.

Lastly, we required a multiagency report on heroin from the Department of Justice and 25 other Federal agencies. This report included recommendations and best practices for combating this crisis in our country. These experts said that there is hope to mitigate the issue, but that law enforcement and public health must work together to educate and intervene with effective treatments. They gave us a road map to take action, and several of their recommendations can be found in this bill.

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act is a first step toward stemming the tide of the harm that opioids and heroin have wreaked on our country. Along with the appropriations supplemental from Senator SHAHEEN, it will provide immediate action and a comprehensive response. Unfortunately, my colleagues voted against this amendment, meaning we have to wait another day to put money for these expanded services in the Federal checkbook.

This bill recognizes that the problem won't be solved just by the Federal Government or local governments acting alone. We must come together with a multipronged solution working on all levels of government and including our allies in the public and private sector.

We all share the same goal in this instance. We must do more and do better to reduce prescription drug abuse, to help those struggling with addiction, to keep heroin and opioids out of the hands of children, to stop those who are trafficking and selling these dangerous drugs, and to better train and



equip those on the front lines of this battle to save lives. I urge the adoption of this bill and I pledge to do my best to provide the Federal funding needed in the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2017.

## VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for yesterday's vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Grassley-Leahy amendment No. 3378 to S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Bill. I would have voted yea.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for yesterday's cloture vote on the Grassley-Leahy amendment No. 3378 in the nature of a substitute to S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015. I would have voted yea. •

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## TRIBUTE TO ZAK BAIG

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise today with enormous pride, but also real sadness, to honor one of my most talented and longest serving staff members, Zak Baig, as he departs the Senate and starts an exciting new career.

Zak has worked his way up the ranks in my office. He started working for me on the House side and in the process has filled almost every role in sight, starting with chief bottle washer and going up from there. He actually started in 2001, shortly after I was elected to the U.S. House, as an intern back in Hammond, LA. He did a great job there.

In 2002, he was an intern in DC and showed even greater progress and promise, and then he came on full time as a legislative correspondent at the end of 2002.

In 2004, I ran for the U.S. Senate. It was a big undertaking and an enormous challenge to take on a statewide campaign. Zak moved onto the campaign side and was in charge of the grassroots effort, which was enormously important and helped lead to our success. He truly helped guide us to victory that year.

After that, as we started working in the Senate, he became an integral member of the Senate staff. In those first 3 years, he served as our projects director and then in 2008 became legislative director.

In 2013, Zak served as a Republican staff director for the EPW Committee, while I was the ranking Republican.

In 2015, after we took the majority and I became chair of the Small Busi-

ness Committee, Zak became the full staff director there, as well as acting chief of staff for a period of time.

As I said, he has absolutely worked his way up the ranks and merited each and every step of the way, doing a better and better job as he progressed. You can tell that in his body of work, which is very impressive and which, of course, I benefited from.

At the EPW Committee, as a Republican staff director, Zak helped navigate the legislative waters and shepherd through some major infrastructure legislation in the Senate.

At the staff level, he was able to lead the negotiations of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, starting from drafting bipartisan legislation with Senator BARBARA BOXER and her staff—the chair of the committee—to negotiating with the House of Representatives in conference, to ultimately getting the bill signed into law. It was a major legislative accomplishment. Shortly after that, he turned around and helped do the same thing with the highway bill reauthorization.

Under his leadership, we also conducted some really important oversight of the administration, particularly the EPA, the Department of Transportation, and other agencies under the jurisdiction of the EPW Committee. When we moved to the majority and chairmanship of the Small Business Committee, Zak served as staff director, just as, if not more, effectively. He helped lead the way as we passed 22 bipartisan bills out of the committee in just 1 year, 8 of which have become law. To put that in some perspective, our predecessor on the committee only passed 10 bills out of the committee over 5 years. So it really was making the committee work in an effective, bipartisan way—as it should. And just in general, in the office Zak was behind a lot of our major efforts and achievements and was always effective at whatever he put his mind to.

A lot of that success is directly attributed to his never-ending energy, his drive to see things through from start to finish, and, maybe even more importantly, his personality, his attitude, his sense of humor, his being able to do tough things and always getting along with those he was occasionally battling with because he always did it with a smile and a friendly attitude, and he probably had a friendly joke or two mixed in.

It is at that personal level that I am most saddened to say goodbye to Zak—at least working with him day to day professionally—although we will obviously keep in close touch.

I have been honored to have been a mentor to so many younger folks who have worked in the Senate office. I have been honored to mentor Zak through the years, and it really has been a personal privilege and honor. Through those years, I have literally seen him grow up from a young stu-

dent—a boy, really—to a consummate professional, a wonderful husband, and a great father. I like to think I had a little bit to do with that as well, because Zak met his wonderful wife Wendy when they both worked for me in the Senate office. In fact, their marriage is one of four that came out of our Senate office, which, as I look back at my service in the Senate, is probably the statistic and fact I will be most proud of—the young people I helped mentor and served with and those marriages that directly came out of the office.

In that sense—through that mentoring and through those years—I gained not just a great staff leader but a true and dedicated friend, and for that I will always be grateful. It is at that personal level that I will think back about fights, struggles, work, challenges, and a lot of jokes and fun we had along the way.

In that spirit, I want to leave Zak with three parting gifts. One has to do with a day when I carried something with me from committee hearing to floor activity and then to actually giving a speech on the floor with it next to me. It is a funny photograph which will not be described in more detail. It is perfectly PG-rated, but it is an inside joke. After that day, Zak got a hold of that framed photograph, and I think it has been completely destroyed. But there was a file of the originals involved, and so I will hand that to him as a parting gift as part of the inside joke.

On another occasion, commemorating his enormous devotion to Syracuse sports—he went to Syracuse as an undergraduate—a prized basketball of his was hijacked. This was a basketball signed by Coach Jim Boeheim after their national championship season in 2003. It was hijacked and moved locations. It sent ransom notes from all around the country for quite a protracted period before Zak got it back.

I was going to have the basketball with me to help tell the story today only to find out that it has been hijacked again. So my second parting gift to Zak is to get in contact with the abductors and return the prized basketball for yet a second time.

The third, and probably the most important parting gift, is to give Zak the true credit he deserves. One fight I took on in the last several years is to have Members and staff health care handled appropriately as was intended under ObamaCare—the so-called Washington exemption of ObamaCare—ending that. I just want to give Zak full and public credit that that crusade and idea was really his and his alone—not. I just wanted to give him one last heart attack, thinking for a split second that his promising lobbying career had just ended before it even began.

I know that Zak's Senate peers and our constituents in Louisiana will miss his tireless service, but no one will miss that and his camaraderie, good humor, and friendship more than my

wife Wendy and our four children. We have all become very close with him and his wife Wendy and their two sons. We also know his parents very well and are friends with them back home in Louisiana. We wish them all the best.

I know Zak's greatest achievements are ahead of him, not behind, and I can tell him to count me in as a cheerleader and fan as he takes on those new challenges.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA

• Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, Antonin Scalia entered the world as the son and grandson of Italian immigrants in 1936. When he unexpectedly departed this life last month, he was the patriarch of a large American family and the intellectual father of the most important legal movement in generations. Between those points, he lived an extraordinarily full life that helped shaped the course of our country.

By 1980, Scalia had already accomplished more at the age of 44 than most can ever hope to in a lifetime. He had been a distinguished lawyer, served at the highest levels of the government, and taught at the country's best law schools. He might have continued to develop a reputation as the Nation's brightest law professor and scholar, but providence had still more to ask of him.

Upon his election, President Ronald Reagan came to Washington with a mission to restore a country that seemed divided and in decline. He promised to rebuild our military, revive our economy, and restore our sense of purpose. Just as critical as these efforts, Reagan was determined to bring new life to our Founders' vision of our Constitution, which provided for carefully limited government, separation of powers, and the rule of law. In accordance with that determination, Reagan appointed Scalia first to the critical D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals and then to the Supreme Court of the United States. The three-decade judicial career that followed would establish Justice Scalia as one of

the most influential American jurists—and one of the most consequential Americans—in our Nation's history.

The Federal judiciary that Scalia joined in 1982 had, for too long, both abused and shirked its proper role. It had stripped the American people and their elected representatives of their legitimate powers by inventing brand-new "constitutional rights" practically out of thin air. Just as troubling, it had failed to uphold the very real constitutional limits on government. The courts too often treated the text of statutes as mere suggestions and often appointed themselves as a kind of super-legislature.

Scalia would not stand for this. He saw this prevailing approach of judges as an abuse of power and a threat to a free and self-governing people. For Scalia, the rule of law was the touchstone of liberty, and judges had an important role in upholding it. He understood that America has a written Constitution for clear reasons: to restrict government and preserve liberty. As a judge, Scalia insisted that the Constitution be applied as written and originally understood, not freely interpreted by unelected judges. If the Constitution must change, as it has needed to throughout our history, the document itself offers an amendment process.

Justice Scalia had a sharp and well-articulated legal philosophy that put the text and meaning of the Constitution and law front and center. A judge, Scalia believed, must put aside his policy preferences in order to say what the law is. "The judge who always likes the results he reaches is a bad judge," he said.

Justice Scalia lived out this approach on the bench. His majority opinions established clear and well-articulated precedents. His sharp and colorful dissents brilliantly exposed moments when too many of his colleagues preferred to put policy preferences and outcomes above the Constitution and the rule of law. For conservatives, the words "Scalia dissents" always offered a silver lining—they meant that a likely damaging legal precedent would at least come pre-packaged with a wonderfully readable corrective.

Whether he was on the majority or minority side of a decision, the forceful logic and clear phrasing of Scalia's opinions commanded attention and engagement. Over time, his most reliable intellectual adversaries found themselves increasingly forced to fight on the ground he established. While Justice Scalia did not win every argument, he changed the conversation forever. Judicial activism no longer has a free hand because Scalia challenged it and inspired an entire generation of legal minds to follow his example.

His judicial writing alone would have changed American law and advanced the cause of liberty, but Justice Scalia went further than that. He wrote books, lectured, and mentored stu-

dents. He traveled around the country, engaged the media, and debated colleagues and critics. His many law clerks now distinguish themselves throughout the legal profession. The Federalist Society, which he helped nurture in its fledgling years, now provides a lively forum for a variety of conservative and libertarian perspectives on law. Antonin Scalia has left us a legal culture absolutely transformed from the one he found.

Justice Scalia's judicial opinions, legal philosophy, and forceful advocacy for the rule of law inspired me as a law student and continue to inspire me to this day. While a wide array of life experiences and values have shaped the way I see America and the world, Antonin Scalia has been the single most important influence on my view of the Constitution and the proper role of judges in our Republic as men and women who should put the original meaning of our Constitution ahead of their policy preferences.

Justice Scalia's life is a testimony to the fact that ideas matter. It is proof that a person of principle, with the willingness to invest in debate and persuasion, can change history. His life also reminds us of another important truth. Particularly in these sharply divided partisan times, we can lose sight of the fact that the things that unite us are more important than the things that divide us. Justice Scalia never did. He knew the Constitution was his sole guide in his professional life, but he was also a devout Catholic who accepted that God has a plan for all of us. He took evident joy in living out his faith, in loving his family, and in nurturing countless friendships, even with his ideological foes. We should all be grateful that God's plan for our Nation, especially the people whose paths he crossed, included having Justice Scalia on the Court for the past 30 years. He was a role model for all of us and particularly for Christians in public life.

As a U.S. Senator, I led a bipartisan group of colleagues in filing an amicus brief in the Supreme Court. The brief, submitted in the case of *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, defended the practice of legislative prayer. It argued that the original meaning of the First Amendment clearly did not require the purging of religious expression from the public square. I attended the oral argument in the case and will forever be grateful for having had the opportunity to watch Justice Scalia's sharp and incisive questioning from the bench.

Although I did not have the good fortune to get to know Justice Scalia personally, he had a profound impact on me. All those who cherish the Constitution and limited government mourn this great loss. Justice Scalia was a brilliant legal mind who served with honor, distinction, and only one legal objective: to interpret and defend the Constitution as written. He is a model for exactly what his successor and all future Justices should strive to be on the highest Court in the land.